

I just read an article about phone charges (specifically the "Carrier Cost Recovery Charge") in our Raleigh, NC "News & Observer" today (Aug. 24, 2004), & wish to comment on the CCRC.

We live in Clayton, NC, & the local phone service is provided by Sprint. I asked them recently about the CCRC, after noticing it on our bill, & wondering what it was for. We seem to be only charged the CCRC if we make any long distance phone calls from our home phone.

We recently started using my Verizon cell phone, new contract 6/7/04, to make long distance calls, & the month we did not make any LD calls from our landline phone, we did not have a CCRC charge, but when my husband accidentally forgot to use my cell phone to make one short LD call, which was free due to the Sprint 50 At Home (?) plan we have, the cost of the call was \$0.00, but the CCRC cost \$.99 plus additional taxes on it.

I agree with those quoted in the AP article as saying that the wording of the CCRC & any explanations given by phone company representatives make the CCRC seem like a tax, which is what I thought it was, until reading the article tonight, even though I don't recall the Sprint representative actually calling it a "tax." They just made it sound like it was something they "had" to do

(i.e. they were required to do it b/c they were being charged the fee by the government, so then they had to pass along that fee to the customer.)

But according to the article, the fee companies charge is not a direct "passed-along" fee or tax from the government. The phone companies' charging of customers the CCRC fee feels dishonest. It should be built into the cost they charge the customers for their service, not added on top of it, like taxes are. If all companies were required to do so, their bottom lines wouldn't look as nice, but at least customers wouldn't feel like they were being dealt with dishonestly.

The companies' charging the CCRC fee is akin to eBay sellers charging a "handling" fee in addition to the selling price. As a sometime-eBayer, it bothers

me when sellers add a "handling" fee, especially since I have read in eBay's rules that sellers are not supposed to charge a handling fee; they are supposed to figure in any additional costs from the business of selling (i.e. purchase of packaging supplies, gas to go to the PO, listing fees, etc.) into the list price.

I hope the FCC is able to stop the phone companies from listing the CCRC fee separately on their bills; I think the CCRC fees should just be added into the price companies charge their customers for their service. The taxes by themselves are high enough (25% of our latest monthly phone bill; \$26.95 for local service plus caller ID, call waiting, CIDCW, *69, & a host of other nice

features; \$4.95 for LineGuard; \$.32 for extended local service calls we made that month; \$10.58 in "taxes?" -- \$5.66 Interstate access surcharge, \$.50 Federal universal service fund, \$.85 Emergency 911 surcharge, \$.11 Telecommunications relay surcharge, \$.47 Wireless portability surcharge (that should not be charged -- that's another issue -- they should only charge that to people who want to port their numbers), \$1.01 Federal tax, & \$1.98 State Tax.)

Thank you for your work in serving the public!

Sincerely,

Betsy M.